

## **Cook to serve 59 months; be supervised for life**

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News

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Micah Cook, the former USD 475 senior high school teacher who had an unlawful relationship with a 15-year-old student, was ordered to serve 59 months in prison during her sentencing hearing Friday afternoon in Geary County District Court.

The 59 month sentence is in connection with three counts of aggravated indecent liberties with a child that occurred in spring 2009.

Cook was also ordered to serve one year in jail for three counts of violating a protection/no contact order. This stems from her contact with the victim in September 2009.

The sentences will run concurrently.

Cook will be under post-release supervision for the rest of her life and will have to register as a sex offender and pay any restitution that might be found necessary.

Cook has 10 days to appeal the court's sentence.

The defense had asked for the court to depart from the normal sentencing guidelines to allow Cook to undergo extensive, long-term therapy.

Psychologist Dr. David Mouille, a witness for the defense, testified that Cook suffered from Posttraumatic Stress Disorder and borderline personality disorder.

He said these disorders may have affected her judgment and made her more likely to enter unhealthy relationships.

"They essentially made her a woman that can't say no," Mouille said.

His proposed treatment plan for Cook would have included extensive psychological therapy paired with extension court supervision. The goal of the treatment would have been to teach Cook how to build healthy relationships and "operate in the adult world."

However, Mouille said these issues would likely be problems Cook would deal with for the rest of her life.

The defense suggested that Cook's disorders came from a long history of abuse from males. Cook's parents testified that she had a history of physically or verbally abusive relationships.

It was suggested by the defense that Cook entered into a relationship with the minor in question because he was unlike the rest of the men she had been involved with.

Assistant county attorney Michelle Brown asked Cook if she entered into a relationship with the minor because she was unable to have successful, sexual relationships with adults.

Cook testified that hadn't been her intention and she had developed feelings for the minor over time.

"Miss Cook, he's a child," Brown said. "If you don't know how you got there, how do you know you won't be there again?"

Brown said Cook's violations of protection and no contact orders suggest she would be unable to follow the guidelines of the defense's proposed extensive therapy program.

After testimony from Cook, her parents, Dr. Mouille, and the victim's grandfather, the court decided there wasn't substantial reason to depart from the sentencing guidelines of 59 to 118 months in prison for her three convictions of aggravated indecent liberties with a child.